DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 923 UD 025 836

AUTHOR Hill, Paul, Jr.
TITLE Simba: Coming of Age for the African-American Male.
PUB DATE 10 Feb 87
NOTE 27p.; For related document, see UD 025 837.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS African Culture; *Black Culture; *Black Education; Black Family; *Blacks; *Males; *Role Models; Socialization; Social Responsibility
IDENTIFIERS *Initiation Rites; Machismo; Rites of Passage; *Simba Program

ABSTRACT

Black American males lack a ceremony to usher them into manhood. Such a ritual could help to ensure proper socialization and self identity. It may counteract the negative influence of street culture. Like other major life change ceremonies, a coming-of-age rite can help to locate anew the individual within the community. Elements of this rite of passage should be the following: (1) contact with nature; (2) ordeal and challenge; (3) solitude; (4) public witness; and (5) symbolic representations. The Simba Program implemented by the East End Neighborhood House in Cleveland, Ohio, offers a rite of passage process for black males. The program provides social supports, information, and skill development. This voluntary program requires attendance for six hours per week for one to three years depending on the rapidity of skill development. The institutionalization of this type of process is imperative for the survival of black Americans. (VM)

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10-27-87

ED287923

SIMBA: COMING OF AGE FOR THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE

Submitted To:

United Neighborhood
Centers of America

Date:

February 10, 1987

Submitted By:

Paul Hill, Jr.
Executive Director
East End Neighborhood House
2749 Woodhill Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44104

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"What we need in the world today is not knowledge of these things so much as experience of these things."

--Laurens Vander Post in Patterns of Renewal

Men are not born, but made. The shaping begins early in life, communicated in the ways they are held, what they are fed, when and how they are consoled, why they are sung to or smiled at. It continues over the years as they are told what stories are worth their attention and what adventures worth their energies. They are taught what to value and to ignore. Eventually, they are ready to be admitted to the rights and responsibilities of full cultural membership. Only then do they become men.

As stated in the 1984 publication by Nathan and Julia Hare, The Endangered Black Family, " The Black male's lifelines to masculinity are being systematically severed. There is no ceremony, or ritual even, as in ancient Africa or the Jewish Bar Mitzvah, to usher the Black male into proper manhood. Nobody ever, officially, tells him when he has attained manhood, and there is generally too little to signify or certify it concretely."(1)

In the context of a thwarted socialization, many Black males appear to never fully realize that they have embarked upon manhood; hence the persistence of a multitude of adolescent distractions extend far into maturity. The Black community has lost effective controls over the machinery of childrearing and the socialization of its youth. The by-products of this loss is two generations of Black youth that lack identity, purpose and direction; and connectiveness to self, family, community and ancestry. They have been profoundly integrated into the life, values and arms of White America.

However, many have not been taken in. Many do realize The Man cannot be trusted, so their moral is "take the money and run! But, this attitude is deleterious to race unity, because it produces a kind of calculating personality which believes neither in The Man nor in Black people. Only self has meaning, only self is relevant. Community is simply another word for market.

This perspective within the middle class has its counterpart among Black street youth, where a new predatory urban class has emerged, which, indifferent to and about life, preys on the old, the innocent and one another. These young Blacks have no productive role in the American economy and, left to this society, shall never have one. Lacking historical consciousness and social conscience, they represent a great irony, for they are, in one sense, the new warriors--only they ravage The People instead of The People's enemies. The conditions and status of the Black male has been addressed: The Crisis of The Black Male, Special issue of Ebony Magazine, August, 1983; Countering The Conspiracy To Destroy Black Boys, Jawanza Kunjufu, Volumes I and II; Black Masculinity: The Black Male's Role in American Society, Robert Staples; Changing Masculinity, Clyde Franklin, Jr.; The Black Males in Jeopardy?, Crisis Magazine, March, 1986.

Black male youth are hitting the streets in record numbers. Today in the United States, there are about 2,200 gangs with 96,000 members located in about three hundred American towns and cities.(2) National youth gang activity in 1984 represented a cross-section of ethnic groups, however, it was the Black street gangs which received the greatest notoriety. Unlike his White counterpart, the Black gang member must cope with far more adversities and as a result, his reactions to them are often more violent.

Validation of beingness as a male is a need that is fulfilled through connection, attachment, worth, recognition, respect and legitimacy. If such a need cannot be satisfied through formal institutions via job or status, they will seek other alternatives to compensate for denial and exclusion. Manhood, in America, is closely tied to the acquisition of wealth. Wealth is power----power to control others. Under a system of internal colonialism, Black males will be more likely to commit criminal acts or be arrested for such because the society denies them access to its goals and wealth. In many instances when lifelines to masculinity are systematically severed, Black males overcompensate in the sexual arena. Rape and violence is an act of aggression that affords a moment of power, and by extension, status. Novelist, Gloria Naylor, in The Women of Brewster Place, describes such a moment of power:

> " These young men always moved in a pack, or never without two or three. They needed the others continually near to verify their existence. When they stood with their Black skin, ninth-grade diplomas, and fifty-word vocabularies in front of the mirror that the world had erected and saw nothing, those other pairs of tight jeans, suede sneakers, and tinted sunglasses imaged nearby proved that they were alive. . .They move through the streets, insuring that they could at least be heard, if not seen, by blasting their portable cassette players and talking loudly. They continually surnamed each other man and clutched at their crotches, readying the equipment they deemed necessary to be summoned at any moment. . . She had stepped into the thin strip of earth that they had claimed as their own. Bound by the last building on

> Brewster and a brick wall, they reigned in that unlit alley like dwarfed warrior-kings. Born with the appendages of power, circumcised by a guillotine, and baptized with the stream from a million non-reflective mirrors, these young men wouldn't be called upon to thrust a bayonet into an Asian farmer, target a torpedo, scatter their iron seed from a B-52 into the would of the earth, point a finger to move a nation, or stick a pole into the moon--and they knew it. They only had that three-hundred foot alley to serve them as stateroom, armored tank, and executioner's chamber. So, Lorraine found herself on her knees, surrounded by the most dangerous species in existence--human males with an erection to validate in a world that was only six feet wide."(3)

The Washington Post, January 5, 1986, covered a story entitled, "Fuller Killers Bred by Mean Streets." Catherine Fuller, a ninety-nine pound wife and mother was brutally killed by eight young Black males. Catherine Fuller, like the fictitious Lorraine in Naylor's story, was a victim of men-children. Men-children created by over indulgent mothers, lack of positive male role-models, a non-supportive/nurturing community and self-hate.

Machismo, which is a male defensive mechanism, reflects an exaggerated awareness and assertion of masculinity. The status conferral system in Black life initiates the youth into acts of aggression, legitimization of beingness as a male vis-a-vis esteem and respect is reserved for the best fighter and sexual exploiter. The teaching role of the family and the church has been replaced by mass culture, which is having a disastrous effect on Black youth.

An African-American Child Care Conference conducted in September of 1981 in Columbus, Ohio, noted that in 1950, home had the greatest impact on children; followed closely by school, church, peer group and television. In 1980, home remained number one, but peer group had moved into second position, followed closely by television, school, and church.(4) It is predicted, television to be number one in 1988. The institutions have drastically changed since 1950. The peer group and the electronic media have increased their influence and are predicted to overcome the family by 1990. The influences of school and church have rapidly declined. The influence of peer, and media manipulation via sex and drug related images and sounds have altered our culture and lifestyles.

The fastest and greatest influence on most male youth are the streets. The street time increases as male youth become older, because most parents spend less time and give more freedom to their children. The street constitutes an institution in the same way that the church, school and family are conceived as institutions. They all have a set of values and norms to govern and reinforce their existence. Of course, the social structure of the streets lack the sophistication these other institutions have. Nevertheless, it is an institution because it helps to shape and control behavior. And, it is on the streets where the Black child receives his basic orientation to life. The streets become his primary reference because other institutions have failed to provide him with the essential skills needed to survive. The streets, and in many cases, hard-working but indulgent mothers, grandmothers and girlfriends have contributed the increasing numbers of man-children. As reported by Black Washington writer, Pat Press who wrote in a Wash-

ton Post column concerning the Catherine Fuller murder that, contrary to all the old "wisdom" about man-children being mistreated at home, "home is a warm and protected environment provided by the women in their lives. Mothers, grandmothers, sisters and girlfriend who work, pay their bills, cook their meals, buy their clothes and in some cases support their nicotine and marijuana habits. It was the women in their lives who stepped forth, took the stand, pledged to tell the truth and provided alibis (which at least one of the boys denied when he took the stand.)" Invariably, the women called these big, strapping, violent and lazy men "my little boy." Pat Press put those women's situation in harsh, but unfortunately all-too-true terms. "The belief long held by Blacks that the woman has been the savior of the race needs some fresh exploration because there is a pile of evidence collecting out there, largely ignored--that says it ain't necessarily so. The women, she concluded, "are in desperate need of help."

As stated by Jawanza Kunjufu, Countering The Conspiracy To Destroy Black Boys, "There is a conspiracy to destroy Black boys in this country."(5) To use the word conspiracy, which is an act of plotting together to harm some, to describe certain aspects of our society is a strong indictment of the social fabric of this country. The conspiracy to destroy Black boys is very complex and interwoven. There are many contributors to the conspiracy, ranging from the very visible who are more obvious, to the less visible and silent partners who are more difficult to recognize.

Those people who adhere to the doctrine of White racism, imperialism, and White male supremacy are easier to recognize. What makes the conspiracy more complex are those people who do not plot

together to destroy Black boys. but through their indifference, self interests, and apathy, perpetuate it. This passive group of conspirators consists of women (particularly mothers), educators, clergy, elected officials, professionals and White liberals. Counter-conspiracy strategy development is necessary to negate the conspiracy and enhance African-American male development. Such development is predicated on a cultural struggle. Culture is more than music, language, dress or food. Culture is everything you do; it's your lifestyle which results from the way you perceive yourself within the context of the world. A part of culture should be the successful transition from boyhood to manhood.

A transitional process/program is necessary for tilling, cultivating and nurturing a new generation of African-American males who have respect for self, family and community. In many cultures, the final entrance into adulthood has been provided from time immemorial by the "coming-of-age" ceremony. Like the other major life change ceremonies accompanying birth, marriage, and death, the coming-of-age ceremony located the individual anew within the surrounding community and indeed within the universe as a whole. It was a critical moment of expansion, the entrance into larger responsibilities, larger privileges, larger secrets, larger institutions, larger understandings. It amounted to a second birth, entry not into physical life, but into the higher life of culture and spirit. Accordingly, it called for The Society to display itself to full effect, giving presence to its myths and traditions, physical expression to its animating beliefs. The sophistication of the post-industrial world, by contrast, holds ceremony suspect, seeing it as a kind of primitive witchery that tricks us into beliefs that the intellect would not otherwise find its way to.

Further damage has been done by the countless repeated fragmentations that have exploded nearly all of the comfortable assumptions needed to cushion any act of ritual acknowledgement. Ceremony lives by continuity, not change. And so, the coming-of-age ceremony in its pure form has disappeared from all but the most traditional and isolated societies. This is highly regrettable in the view of many people who point to the foundering of contemporary youth--their extended identity crises and the frantic searching for self in the fires of intense experience--as a symptom of the loss of any discernible threshold to pass over into accepted adulthood. The Gateway is gone, leaving the younger generations to thrash through the underbrush on their own in the hope of finding reasonable passage.

School is probably the nearest modern equivalent to the ancient initiation rites. Both are compulsory. Both try to bend the unruly energies of youth to constructive social purpose. Both teach obedience, discipline, and the basics of proper social comportment. Both express and communicate the central value of the sponsoring culture. Both reveal previously hidden knowledge. Both are challenging and exhausting. Both eventually result in new ways of seeing the world. Both certify the youth for participation in the larger society as an emergent adult. But, there are significant differences, too. The old rites were religious, the new is secular. The old rites ran by sun and seasonal time. They were outdoors and active. The new rite operates by clock and calendar. It is mostly sedentary and pursued behind closed doors. The old rites centered on concrete reality experiences; The Rite relies heavily on words, numbers, and abstractions. The old rites provided bodily risks and danger; the new substitutes organized sports which combine moderate

challenge and minimal risk. The old rites were dramatic, intense events, forceful and fast--the new is slow, strung out, often vague about ultimate destination. The old stimulated awe; the new rite commonly produces detachment and boredom. The old rites typically gave a sense of vital participation in the historical unfoldment of The Culture as a whole. The new rite is often conceived as a holding pattern, an isolation from the larger cultural reality rather than an intensification of it. The old rites resulted in an immediate and unmistakeable status change. The new rite provides no such direct deliverance into adult roles and status. The old rites were over in a determined place and at a determined time, witnessed by the community as a whole. The new rite can meander on indefinitely, disappearing down corridors of specialization that may never lead back to The General Consensus or any act of community witness.

Given, however unsatisfactorily, school fulfills the psychological requirements of a true rite of passage, it is necessary to find other institutions and/or organizations to provide their own ceremonies to clarify and dramatize childrens' passage to adulthood. In summary, rites of passage symbolizes that a young person is moving out of the corridors of childhood and into a new relationship with the family and the world beyond: It also symbolizes the youngster is prepared to take on a greater degree of responsibility for his or her sexual dimension and for making his or her way in the world.

Elements necessary to bear in mind in the development of a Rites of Passage Program are: contact with nature; ordeal and challenge; solitude; public witness and symbolic representations.

Descriptions of adulthood, coming-of-age and Rites-of-Passage are reflected in the works of Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, Frank T. Fair, Orita For Black Youth, Nathan and Julia Hare, Bringing The Black Boy To Manhood: The Passage. All reflect a structured process grounded in tradition. Thomas Gordan in The Black Adolescent notes that in African culture, community is pre-eminent and membership is the foundation for existence. The Western mode or perspective--with its awesome applications for mental illness and adolescent stress--teaches us a reality of individual aspiration, material accumulation, technological complexity, frantic upward mobility and the rhetoric of personal liberty.(6)

In the West, the Euro-American really expects to produce healthy, happy children only under the auspices of the nuclear family concept. This assumption is preposterous: An adult family cannot and never will complete nurturing, communicative, and recuperative powers to meet the full needs of male children. The nuclear and single family, organized for mobility, provides its children with "things" and "events" and "accelerating" experiences, but relatively little community or connection. We are "child focused" in "what" and "how much" we give to children, but typically poor architects in building incorporative networks for their wider connection and support. Television and public day care are the West's rejoinder to African community and connection. The Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children made special note of this:

> This nation which looks to the family to nurture its young, gives no real help with child rearing until a child is badly disturbed or disruptive to the community. The discontent, apathy, and violence today are warning that society has not assumed its responsibility to ensure

> an environment which will provide optimum care for its children. The Family cannot be allowed to withstand, alone, the enormous pressures of an increasingly technological world. Within the community, some mechanisms must be created which will assume the responsibility for ensuring the necessary supports for the child and family.(7)

In October, 1984, East End Neighborhood House, Cleveland, Ohio, implemented a Rites-of-Passage Program for Adolescent Males--Simba. Simba is Kiswahili for young lions. The Simba Program is based on a communal family concept which functions as a socialization and support system for the adolescent male and family. The communal family concept is based on accepting responsibility for one another regardless of blood or kinship--peoplehood!

The Simba concept also reflects a socially supportive network of churches, Greeks, Masons, neighborhood centers, community groups and professional organizations; these groups must adhere to The Nguzo Saba or Seven Principles of Simba. The foundation of The Simba Program is predicated on The Nguzo Saba or Seven Principles. Principles are important because without them, practice would be incorrect and suffer, and possibilities will be limited. Principles are categories of commitment and priorities which define human possibilities and a value system. The premise of The Nguzo Saba is based on Dr. Ron Karenga's Kawaida Theory which maintains, "That if the key crisis in Black life is the cultural crisis, i.e., a crisis in views and values, then social organization or rather reorganization must start with a new value system."(9) The Nguzo Saba are the moral minimum value system Black people need in order to rescue and reconstruct their history and humanity, indeed their

daily lives, in their own image and interests.

THE NGUZO SABA--SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF SIMBA

1. Umoja (Unity) -- The commitment to the principle and practice of togetherness and collective action on crucial levels, i.e., building and maintaining unity in the family, community, nation and race. This is the first and foundational principle because without unity our possibilities as a people are few and fragile, if existent at all.
2. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) -- A commitment to the principle and practice of defining, defending and developing ourselves instead of being defined, defended and developed by others. It demands that we build our own lives in our own image and interests and construct through our own efforts, institutions that house our aspirations.
3. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) -- A commitment to active and informed togetherness on matters of common interests. It is also recognition and respect of the fact that without collective work and struggle, progress is impossible and liberation unthinkable.
4. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) -- A commitment to the principle and practice of share wealth and resources. It grows out of the fundamental African communal concept that the social wealth belongs to the masses of people who created it and that no one should have such an unequal amount of wealth that it gives him/or her the capacity to impose unequal exploitative and oppressive relations on others.
5. Nia (Purpose) -- A commitment to the collective vocation of building, defending and developing our national community in

order to regain our historical initiative and greatness as a people. At the core of this principle is the assumption and contention that the highest form of personal purpose is, in the final analysis, social purpose, i.e., personal purpose that translates itself into a vocation and commitment which involves and benefits the masses of Black people.

6. Kuumba (Creativity) -- A commitment to the principle and practice of building rather than destroying or positive pro-active construction rather than negative re-active destruction. Inherent in this principle is the commitment to leave our national community stronger, more beautiful and more effective in its capacity to define, defend and develop its interests than when we inherited it.

7. Imani (Faith) -- A commitment to ourselves as persons and a people and the righteousness and victory of our struggle. Moreover, it is belief in and commitment to our brothers and sisters, to their defense and development, and to the fullness of our collective future. Inherent in the principle of Imani is the call for a humanistic faith, an earth-oriented, earth-based, people-centered faith in the tradition of the best of African philosophies and values.

The environment for Simba is socially supportive and transcends nuclear, extended and single family structures. Such family forms in contemporary America are incapable of developing male children. Simba functions as a guidance system through which African-America speaks to its young males telling them--

* Who they are
* Where they should be going
* What they need to do to get there

* What they must have when they arrive

Simba as a ritualizing process has the following goals:

* Give definite initial directions
* Allow emotional expression and promote satisfaction at each step
* Allow for consideration of other family members
* Maintaining a log or scrapbook which serves as The Simba's record of his experiences.
* Provide appropriate recognition for progression vis-a-vis challenges and initiatives
* Recognize African extension from past
* Make appropriate and African custom references through research
* Developing transferable skills to generate and sustain an economy
* Establish future behavior expectations

The Simba process will facilitate the following needs:

* Providing an environment of care, concern and communication
* Providing realistic and flexible limits that relate to physical, emotional, mental, social, moral and spiritual development
* Providing an environment conducive to appropriate learning as related to:

  Telling a participant what is expected,

  Explaining why it is expected,

  Defining the consequences if it is not done,

  Showing a participant how to do what is expected,

  Sharing the task in some instances with participant

  Watch the participant perform the task

Evaluate the results,

Rewarding positively the appropriate response,

Rewarding negatively the inappropriate response.

* Providing participants the liberty to develop the ability to make appropriate choices

Problem-solving and decision-making opportunities with constructive criticism

* Providing experiences in which participants have to accept and shoulder the consequences of his own behavioral choices.

The process for facilitating the aforementioned needs must be kept in relative balance--not too much or too little of any. Each will expand relative to responsibility, ability and maturity of the youth.

The objectives of The Simba process are to accomplish the following:

Legitimization of beingness as a male

Connection, attachment, validation, worth, recognition, respect and legitimacy.

Provision of a family code

Being able to interpret, manage, and respond to both known and undefined situations.

Elasticity of boundaries

Developing rules of conduct that enable participants to determine the latitude and opportunity to stretch out and develop their own sense of "specialness" without fear of fiolating The Family Code.

Provisions of information/knowledge

Strenthening the ability to interpret and understand the events and happenings that effect participants lives.

Mediation of concrete conditions

Ability to engage in interpersonal relations around problem solving and decision-making.

The Simba Program involves a minimum of one year to a maximum of three years of participation. The years of participation correspond to the accomplishment of three skill levels. The skill levels are reflected by the colors of red, green and black. The progression from lowest--red to highest--black is symbolic of the colors of the African-American nation flag. The African-American nation flag was provided by the Honorable Marcus Garvey.

Simba as a Rites of Passage process involves levels of proficiency that relate the following:

Skills that must be developed

Services that must be rendered

Things that must be experienced

Behaviors that must be modeled

Information that must be learned

The skill or curriculum development areas for Simba are as follows:

History and culture

Physical Fitness (Physical, spiritual and mental)

Martial Arts

Nutrition

Wilderness and Survival Training

Cooperative Economics (Ujamaa)

Theory and practice of becoming entrepreneurs using a communal model

Learning Skills Development

Language (Spanish, Arabic, French)

Math

Science

Communication Skills (Written and oral)

The curriculum areas relate directly to fulfilling the prerequisites for Black male functionability and preparing participants for Black manhood as defined in Being A Black Male. Prerequisites for Black male functionability are as follows:

* Cognitive Domain

  Abilities to conceptualize, analyse, synthesize, infer, discriminate and generalize.

* Physical Domain

  Maximum development of physical capacitation.

  Food and nutrition, exercise, sexuality, substance abuse, stress and preventive disease living versus curative disease living.

* Psychological/Emotional Domain

  Strong self-concept, emotional groundedness, trust, capacity for exploration, functional and non-destructive defensive mechanisms and avoidance of mentacidal behaviours.

* Affective Domain

  Exposure to the range of human emotions.

  Anger, fear, love, warmth, sensitivity, caring, loss, hurt, pain, compassion, sharing, closeness, distance, support, encouragement, selfishness, emotional construction and reconstruction.

* Territorial Domain

  Self-Defense and discipline.

* Cultural Domain

  African and African-American History.

Black value system.

Family orientation, roles, responsibility, and accountability, work ethic, childrearing.

* Spirituality

Inseparability between the living and dead.

Quietness and meditation.

Universal force.

Living in harmony with rather than in opposition to the natural laws of the universe, prayer, worship and a deep respect for ancestors.

Being A Black Man!

* Have the ability to assess objective reality in terms of the interest and welfare of Black people on personal, group and communal levels.
* Have the ability to transcend the traps of Euro-Centric pathology and not fall victim to the destructive forces inherent therein.
* Placing supreme value on life and not participate in activities or at least drastically minimize participation in activities which would negate it.
* Hold supreme the value of The Black Family and accord to it all of the support, attention, protection, and leadership necessary to keep it a viable and strong institution.
* Have the capacity to transcend restricted and devalued role sets and not look to or depend upon a hostile culture to provide affirmation of self-worth.
* View Black women as subjects and not objects (possessions) fully capable of contributing equally to the struggles for Black reassertion at every level.

* Maximally develop whatever talents, potentials and capabilities in the interest of self, group and communal advancement and support and facilitate the same achievements in others.
* View one's own children and those of others as the carriers of generational truths and cultural sovereignty and as the precious and irreplacable gifts they are, therefore, according them all the rights, discipline, privileges, protection, guidance, support, nuturance, encouragement, and love requisite to their full, complete and humanistic development.
* Value all work, demean none, promote, encourage and facilitate production and cultivate an appreciation of the unique contributions each person can make, giving primacy to the ethic within one's own family.
* Lead by example not rhetoric; be resilient in the face of adversity, not passive; think before acting; be fluid and flexible not stagnant and fixated; be open and exploratory not confined and dogmatic.
* Develop in self the capacity to express the full range of human experiences and emotions which of necessity dictates an acceptance of the feminine in him, though worn on the inside, without fear or gender confusion. Thus, for example, compassion does not conflict with rugged determination, nor sensitivity with strength, nor courage with rational retreat, but rather each compliments the other. Here the acceptance of the androgynous nature of human beings is critical.
* Not get bogged down in behaviours and attitudes destructive of mutually beneficial and supportive male/female relationships like who makes how much; whose decision; whose role; whose responsibility; whose job; whose career; whose time

whose time to do this or that or the other, etc. The keys are mutuality and support not competition-conflict and the win/lose syndrome.

* View power as an instrument for human advancement and not control; oppression, and the negation of life.
* Accept the continuous challenge of a new battle on a terrain where the most important weapons, perhaps, are a belief in one's own humanity and willingness to pay any price to beat the odds.

It is recommended that The Simba Program be implemented six hours per week--after school, during the weekend or a combination of both. The program should utilize volunteers. Soliciting individuals or groups to sponsor various components of the program such as the Physical Fitness, Cooperative Economics, Learning Skills and History and Culture is also recommended. Sponsorship should involve instruction, fund-raising, Big Brothers (as needed), donations, etc.

Success of The Simba concept is predicated on two key crucial variables--ideology and self-sufficiency. A review of independent Black institutions and youth organizations reflected several factors that related to success and survival. Ideology and degree of self-sufficiency were two variables that stood out that determined the success of the surveyed institutions and organizations.[9] Success is defined as positive impact on youth as related to achievement, attitude, self-esteem and behaviour.

Ideology was based on an Afro-Centric perspective. Such a perspective operated from an extended family basis. It recognized and expressed our uniqueness and experiences as Africans and Americans.

It did not romanticize the past, but corrected and reinforced it for the purpose of providing identity, purpose and direction. It also provided a cultural frame-of-reference grounded in tradition and spiritualism necessary to function as a healthy and whole human being. The principles related to the Afro-Centric perspective (unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith) facilitated the necessary physical, mental and spiritual development for survival and success. The high sense of self/group identity, achievement and adjustment of students and program participants were a result of the Afro-Centric and extended family focus.

Who controls the purse strings will determine what you can or cannot do! Chasing and being primarily dependent upon public and/or private funds in inhibiting and colonialistic. Operation of organizations as businesses from an Afro-Centric perspective is important for institutionalization. Enough money is available in the Black community through an institution such as the Black church; and organizations such as Greeks, Masons and professionals to collaboratively sponsor Rites-of-Passage programs throughout the nation. Those that do not generate their own economy and institutions are doomed to eventual extinction!

Abdication of social responsibility as related to a collective, unified and independent effort to nurture a new generation of Black males has been the rule as opposed to the exception when considering Black adults in positions of responsibility and leadership. The benefactors of The Sixties struggle are approaching retirement. No heirs are apparent because their fathers and uncles failed to develop them and/or maximize/institutionalize a base for them to operate from. Nothing has progressed beyond the philosophy of

Malcolm and Martin Luther King. The rhetoric is the same and the creative strategy/action agenda lacking. We have lost two generations of youth, we cannot afford to lose another. We are approaching a point of no return. It is either now or never, we must seize the time!

The primary source of funds for Simba should be through fund-raising, contributions and income-generating activities. Those that do not generate their own economy are doomed to eventual extinction. Social and technical skills to function as providers must begin during pre-adolescence. This period is not too early to begin to understand the differences between employees and employers; jobs and careers; income and wealth; ideal capitalism and monopoly capitalism; democracy and oligarchy/plutocracy.

The involvement of African-American male adults in The Simba Process as volunteers is crucial. African-American males have for too long, willingly, taken a back seat in issues of importance as related to progressive positions of influence relative to children, family and community. This is glaringly apparent when considering fraternal and professional organizations. In order to develop the male prototype to function as providers, mates and warriors, it is necessary to include male adults in the process. The Simba Process has to become part of African-American culture. The process must be facilitated as a collective effort by and for African-American males. Only men can develop boys into men. In too many instances Black women have had to singlehandedly raise their sons without a male model. Overindulgence and tendency to raise daughters and love sons has resulted in too many males with little or no expectations, and/or responsibilities. The situation has become aggravated by the deterioration of the extended family, influence of The Church,

feminization of poverty, babies having babies, etc.

Simba is necessary to recover our males minds and spirits. In summary, the process is cultural in nature. Without identity, you cannot develop purpose and direction. Culture from an Afro-Centric perspective is the societal glue that is lacking and needed for our emancipation and collective development. A vivid account of how The Ngoni of Malawi in Central Africa bring up their children is found in Margaret Mead's book, Children Of Their Fathers (1968). The Ngoni have a definite image of what it means to be a proper Ngoni. The Ngoni have a strong sense of their cultural identity. They continually differentiate themselves from non-Ngoni groups around them. Ngoni child-rearing practices seem to be a direct result of their desire to maintain a Ngoni identity. At the age of six or seven, boys are removed from the comforting care of women; the harsh and masculine life of the Boy's Dormitory becomes their training ground. When the boys went to live in the dormitory, they did not only escape from the women's world into a boys' circle; they entered the fringe of men's world. They could sit on the edge of the men's group and listen to talk about men's affairs. The kinds of topics discussed including hunting, cases heard in the courts, the application of Ngoni law, and the organization of village affairs.

The Kikuyu's system of education as described by Jomo Kenyatta's Facing Mount Kenya involves the father taking charge of the boy's education when the child has grown beyond babyhood, while the mother takes the whole responsibility of the girl's education and a part of the boy's education.(10)

The Ngoni and Kikuyu as a people have a strong sense of cultural identity, see themselves as superior and understand the close re-

lationship between the education and rearing of children and the development of a proper adult. The Ngoni and Kikuyu have an institutionalized process grounded in history and culture that defines the role of adult males in the socialization of boys.

The removal of Black males from the list of endangered species and the future of African-America is dependent upon the development and institutionalization of a manhood development process--Simba. The institutionalization of such a process is not a matter of choice, but has become an imperative for African-Americans' survival as a people.

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